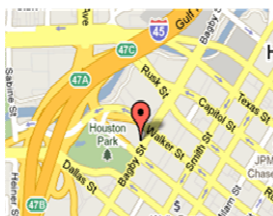


District C News

April 2010

Houston City Hall Annex



Anne Clutterbuck
Houston Mayor Pro Tem

City Hall Annex
900 Bagby, First Floor
Houston, TX 77002

Telephone: 832.393.3004
Fax: 832.393.3239

www.HoustonTX.gov/council/c



Greetings!

In this installment of my monthly newsletter, I would like to highlight the wonderful work and service of the City of Houston Solid Waste Department.

Houston is the fourth largest city in the United States and, unlike most major cities, does not charge a user fee for residential garbage or other solid waste services. In addition to regular garbage collection, the Solid Waste Department has developed a variety of services and facilities to serve Houston's residents.

Curbside recycling allows residents to easily recycle paper, aluminum, and plastic by placing recyclables in green bins alongside their regular trashcans. Bins are picked up once every two weeks. Curbside recycling service is currently available to over 162,000 homes.

For those residents for whom curbside recycling service is not available, there are eleven recycling drop-off sites located throughout the city. Items accepted vary by location, with some facilities accepting tires, electronics, and/or oil. The Solid Waste Management Department has also partnered with H-E-B food stores to accept recyclables at select locations.

City of Houston Resources

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Two Environmental Service Centers ([ESC North](#), 5614 Neches, Building C and [ESC South](#), 11500 South Post Oak) are available to properly dispose of household hazardous waste. Household hazardous waste includes anti-freeze, batteries, fuel, oil, paint, pesticides, and other household cleaners. Environmental Service Centers also accept electronic scrap items such as monitors, CPUs, televisions, and VCRs. I encourage Houstonians to take advantage of this service as these items take up valuable landfill space and can contaminate groundwater. Just bring your ID and a copy of your City of Houston water bill when you drop off your hazardous recycling.

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In addition to accepting recyclables, the Westpark Consumer Recycling Center houses the City's ReStore. The ReStore acts as a book swap, recycling information library, and a repository of post-consumer and post-industrial scrap for use in art projects. In addition, presentations on the importance of recycling are conducted at the ReStore for groups of up to twenty people. A visit to the ReStore is a perfect activity for Boy and Girl Scout troops, youth groups, and summer camps.

As of **April 5th**, all yard waste must be placed in City-approved compostable bags. The approved bags will have the City Seal imprinted on them. Yard waste is defined as grass clippings, tree trimmings, leaves, and small twigs. The bags are clear so that collectors can establish that the contents are in compliance with the initiative's guidelines. Compostable bags containing any material other than yard waste will not be picked up.

I believe this is an important initiative because not only will the switch to compostable bags reduce Houston's environmental impact, it will save the City money. The City of Houston does not have its own landfill and must therefore pay for landfill use. The Solid Waste Management Department uses 31% of its annual budget to pay for landfill services. The City estimates it will save at least \$1.5 million annually by diverting yard trimmings from landfills. The Department will use avoided landfill costs to add more Houstonians to the Automated Recycling Program. Houstonians can choose a free alternative to bagging their leaves and lawn clippings by using a mulching mower for "grasscycling" or making their own personal compost pile.

For more information on the Solid Waste Management Department's programs and facilities, as well as a list of stores selling compostable bags, please visit:
www.houstonsolidwaste.org.

Meet Director Harry J. Hayes

I want to take this opportunity to highlight one of my favorite City employees. Presiding over the above-mentioned programs is Mr. Harry J. Hayes, Director of the City's Solid Waste Department. Mr. Hayes was unanimously confirmed as director by Mayor Bill White and Houston City Council on August 1, 2007. As Director, Mr. Hayes oversees and manages a 650 employee department with a \$77 million dollar annual budget which collects, transports and disposes of nearly 800,000 tons of municipal solid waste annually. A logistical behemoth, the department has four major service centers which cover 640 square miles of territory and provides such services as weekly automated

garbage and yard waste collection, bi-weekly collection of curbside recycling for 162,000 homes, monthly heavy trash service, three transfer stations, four neighborhood heavy trash drop-off sites, six recycling drop-off locations, and city wide dead animal collection.

As Solid Waste Director, Mr. Hayes is also in charge of city debris management operations. He was recently tested as city debris manager when Hurricane Ike struck the City of Houston in September 2008, leaving a debris field of more than 5.7 million cubic yards. Under his leadership, city and contractor crews cleared more than 4.2 million cubic yards of debris within the first 30 days of commencing operations, or 75% of all debris collected.

Mr. Hayes is a 15-year city employee, spending nearly all of his tenure with the Solid Waste Management Department. His former positions include Human Resources Supervisor, Division Manager of Human Resources, Safety & Training Group, Assistant Director-Administration, and Deputy Director- North Operations. He started his career with the City as special assistant to former City Council Member (now State Senator) Rodney Ellis. Mr. Hayes also served as both an enlisted member and an officer in the U.S. Army Reserves where his work assignments included human resources, operations, and supply management.

Mr. Hayes is a 1988 graduate of Texas Southern University, earning a B.A. in French. He also completed international studies at the Universite de Bordeaux in Talence, France in 1985.

Westbury Community Garden Opening

We end this month's newsletter in a beautiful place. I take this opportunity to salute the numerous volunteer leaders who established the Westbury Community Garden in March. This garden, located at 12691 Dunlap Houston, TX 77035, was planned and planted with the assistance of local schools and students who will harvest and prepare the vegetables as part of a culinary arts program.



Children planting vegetables

Gardens are restorative, life-giving, life-affirming places where we can experience nature and work with one another to make our small corner of the earth a better place.

Our religious texts are full of references to gardens and the important role they play in our human and cultural experience. The Garden of Eden is our symbol of paradise on earth; the Garden of Gethsemane is where Jesus sought solace and communion with God.

Our great thinkers, politicians and writers--from Aristotle, Goethe, Sir Francis Bacon, Proust and Shakespeare, to Thoreau and

Emerson--have expressed at one time or another their awe at the simple garden.



Westbury Community Garden

Thomas Jefferson went so far as to proclaim that, "Those who labour in the earth are the chosen people of God."

It is no small thing then that has been accomplished here by so many hands.

I would like to express special thanks to Becky Edmondson of the Westbury Civic Club, the members of the Westbury

Garden Club, Gail Cunningham of Keep America Beautiful, Southwest Region President Jim Bates, Scotts Miracle-Gro, Carol Brouwer of the Texas A & M University System, Carol Ledbetter of Plant a Row for the Hungry, Clark Booker of Bethel's Heavenly Hands, Bill Dawson of the Franklin Park Conservatory, Bob LaGasse of the Garden Writers Association, Sarah Pounders of the National Gardening Association, and so many others that gave their time to make this endeavor a success.

The Westbury Garden has provided us with a place to sustain ourselves, a place to learn about the cycle of life, a place to experience nature and neighborhood, and dare we say it - a place to commune with God.

And for that we are thankful!

I hope that you have found this newsletter useful. Please do not hesitate to contact the District C office for assistance with a City related matter. As always, we stand ready and willing to help.

Sincerely,

Anne Clutterbuck

Anne Clutterbuck
Houston
Council Member
District C

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